

REMARKS

I. Introduction

With the addition of new claims 19 to 26, claims 10 to 26 are currently pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicants note with appreciation the acknowledgment of the claim for foreign priority and the indication that all certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the previously filed Information Disclosure Statement, PTO-1449 paper and cited references.

II. Objection to the Specification

Applicants have amended the Specification to obviate the objection raised. No new matter has been added. Withdrawal of this objection is therefore respectfully requested.

III. Rejection of Claim 10 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a)

Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,555,788. It is respectfully submitted that U.S. Patent No. 6,555,788 does not anticipate claim 10 for at least the following reasons.

The present application entered the national stage on **July 25, 2002** based on International Application No. PCT/DE00/02730, having an international filing date of **August 12, 2000**. Furthermore, the present application claims priority to Application No. 199 44 193.6, filed in the Federal Republic of Germany on **September 15, 1999**. A claim of priority to German Application No. 199 44 193.6 was made, *inter alia*, in the "Combined Declaration and Power of Attorney for Patent Application," which was filed on July 25, 2002. A copy of a certified copy of German Application No. 199 44 193.6 is believed to have been received by the United States Patent and Trademark Office, and a certified English-language translation of German Application No. 199 44 193.6 is submitted herewith.

U.S. Patent No. 6,555,788 issued on **April 29, 2003**, which is **after** the **August 12, 2000** filing date of the present application. It is therefore respectfully submitted that U.S. Patent No. 6,555,788 does not constitute prior art against the

present application under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a). Furthermore, U.S. Patent No. 6,555,788 issued from U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/396,383, filed on **September 15, 1999**, which is not before the date of invention by Applicants. In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that U.S. Patent No. 6,555,788 does not constitute prior art against the present application under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a), or otherwise. Withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

IV. Rejection of Claims 11 to 18 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 11 to 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over the combination of U.S. Patent No. 6,555,788, U.S. Patent No. 6,150,634 and U.S. Patent No. 4,598,676. It is respectfully submitted that the combination of U.S. Patent No. 6,555,788, U.S. Patent No. 6,150,634 and U.S. Patent No. 4,598,676 does not render unpatentable the present claims for the following reasons.

As more fully set forth above, U.S. Patent No. 6,555,788 does not constitute prior art against the present application. Withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Furthermore, U.S. Patent No. 6,150,634 issued on **November 21, 2000** from U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/440,265, filed on **November 15, 1999**. Since the **November 15, 1999** filing date of U.S. Patent No. 6,150,634 is **after** the **September 15, 1999** filing date of German Application No. 199 44 193.6, from which the present application claims priority, and since a claim of priority to German Application No. 199 44 193.6 has been made, and since a certified English-language translation of German Application No. 199 44 193.6 is submitted herewith, it is respectfully submitted that U.S. Patent No. 6,150,634 also does not constitute prior art against the present application.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of U.S. Patent No. 6,555,788, U.S. Patent No. 6,150,634 and U.S. Patent No. 4,598,676 does not render unpatentable the present claims, and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

V. Amendment to Claim 13

Claim 13 has been amended herein without prejudice to correct a typographic error.

VI. New Claims 19 to 26

New claims 19 to 26 have been added herein. It is respectfully submitted that new claims 19 to 26 do not add any new matter and are fully supported by the present application, including the Specification. It is respectfully submitted that new claims 19 to 26 are patentable over the references relied upon for at least the reason that neither U.S. Patent No. 6,555,788 nor U.S. Patent No. 6,150,634 constitutes prior art against the present application.

VII. Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are in condition for allowance. Prompt reconsideration and allowance of the present application are therefore earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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